CLAIMS:
What is claimed is:

1. A method of gathering management information from servers within a cluster, comprising:

receiving management information from probes at each of a plurality of levels within every server within the cluster;

aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels across all servers within the cluster; and

combining the aggregate levels of management information to form a single management image of the cluster.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving management information from probes at each of a plurality of levels within every server within the cluster further comprises:

receiving information from lightweight probes within every server at each of the plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels across all servers within the cluster further comprises:

aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the step of aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level further comprises:

aggregating the received management information at a designated management server rather than on each server within the cluster.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the step of combining the aggregate levels of management information to form a single management image of the cluster further comprises:

combining the aggregate levels of management information at the designated management server.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

generating an extensible markup language data stream containing the single image of the cluster; and

transmitting the data stream to an adapter for each system management application executing on a designated management server within the cluster.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

generating commands based on the single image of the cluster;

dividing the commands based upon a plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level;

subdividing the divided commands according to individual servers within the cluster; and

transmitting each subdivided commands to respective

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probes at a corresponding level within a server within the cluster.

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8. A system for gathering management information from servers within a cluster, comprising:

means for receiving management information from probes at each of a plurality of levels within every server within the cluster;

means for aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels across all servers within the cluster; and

means for combining the aggregate levels of management information to form a single management image of the cluster.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the means for receiving management information from probes at each of a plurality of levels within every server further comprises:

means for receiving information from lightweight probes within every server at each of the plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level.

10. The system of claim 8, wherein the means for aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels across all servers within the cluster further comprises:

means for aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the means for aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels including an application server

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level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level further comprises:

means for aggregating the received management information at a designated management server rather than on each server within the cluster.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the means for combining the aggregate levels of management information to form a single image of the cluster further comprises:

combining the aggregate levels of management information at the designated management server.

13. The system of claim 8, further comprising:

means for generating an extensible markup language data stream containing the single image of the cluster; and

means for transmitting the data stream to an adapter for each system management application executing on a designated management server within the cluster.

14. The system of claim 8, further comprising:

means for generating commands based on the single image of the cluster;

means for dividing the commands based upon a plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level;

means for subdividing the divided commands according to individual servers within the cluster; and

means for transmitting each subdivided commands to respective probes at a corresponding level within a server within the cluster.

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15. A computer program product within a computer usable medium for gathering management information from servers within a cluster, comprising:

instructions for receiving management information from probes at each of a plurality of levels within every server within the cluster;

instructions for aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels across all servers within the cluster; and

instructions for combining the aggregate levels of management information to form a single management image of the cluster.

16. The computer program product of claim 15, wherein the instructions for receiving management information from probes at each of a plurality of levels within every server within the cluster further comprises:

instructions for receiving information from lightweight probes within every server at each of the plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level.

17. The computer program product of claim 15, wherein the instructions for aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels across all servers within the cluster further comprises:

instructions for aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level.

18. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the

instructions for aggregating the received management information at each of the plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level further comprises:

instructions for aggregating the received management information at a designated management server rather than on each server within the cluster.

19. The computer program product of claim 18, wherein the instructions for combining the aggregate levels of management information to form a single image of the cluster further comprises:

combining the aggregate levels of management information at the designated management server.

20. The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising:

instructions for generating an extensible markup language data stream containing the single image of the cluster; and

instructions for transmitting the data stream to an adapter for each system management application executing on a designated management server within the cluster.

21. The computer program product of claim 19, further comprising:

instructions for generating commands based on the single image of the cluster;

instructions for dividing the commands based upon a plurality of levels including an application server level, an operating system level, a network level, and a hardware level;

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instructions for subdividing the divided commands according to individual servers within the cluster; and

instructions for transmitting each subdivided commands to respective probes at a corresponding level within a server within the cluster.

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